

Honorable Senators and Representatives, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today on this important program for the future of Connecticut's coastal Communities. My name is David Kooris and I am the Director of the Office of Planning and Economic Development for the City of Bridgeport.

I would like to first thank and commend Governor Malloy and Commissioner Klein for their leadership on coastal resiliency. Under the Commissioner's direction, the Department of Housing has allocated tranche one and two CDBG-DR funds to those neighborhoods, property owners, and households of greatest need in an objective, efficient, and effective manner. We have no doubt that the distribution of these tranche three funds will continue in kind, and we are fully supportive of their substantial amendment and allocation plan presented here today.

I'd also like to recognize HUD and the leadership of then Secretary Shaun Donovan and current Secretary Julian Castro for spearheading the Rebuild by Design program that has demonstrated a new model for how the Federal government can work with state and local partners to craft bottom-up, innovative solutions to mitigate the risk from future disasters rather than repeatedly repairing the damage that they leave in their wake.

On that topic, I'd like to comment on Rebuild by Design and introduce the funded Resilient Bridgeport concept which is part of the substantial amendment for review today.

The City of Bridgeport was honored to have been chosen by HUD as the only community in Connecticut or New England to participate in Rebuild by Design. We were one of only ten communities selected to advance into this post-Sandy competition alongside Lower Manhattan, Hoboken, Hunts Point, and others. Over the course of merely five months, we dedicated significant staff time and resources to work with a team of experts from the Netherlands, the Gulf Coast, and Yale to better understand the vulnerabilities in our city and the ways in which

we can better prepare for the next severe weather event. We conducted dozens of public meetings, workshops, and tours to engage the full range of public, private, and civic stakeholders with whom partnerships would be essential in order to achieve success. Together, we culled the hundreds of ideas that we generated down to fifteen projects and plans that formed a cohesive strategy for a Resilient Bridgeport that could be replicated in other coastal cities throughout Connecticut and beyond.

These boards (reproduced for you as handouts) describe those projects. This vision was selected by a jury chaired by Secretary Donovan to receive \$10 million in discretionary CDBG-DR funding for implementation, bringing more Federal dollars to Connecticut.

In the six months since that award, we have been working closely with the Department of Housing and other state agencies and a consultant team led by Yale to advance those few ideas from this plan that we feel are best calibrated to protect our vulnerable population and enable continued private investment and long-term prosperity and safety along our coast.

Mayor Finch, myself, and my staff are incredibly excited and humbled that the Federal government has invested in Bridgeport's ability to be a leading laboratory for coastal resiliency that can serve as a model for other communities in Connecticut and the nation.

I look forward to the opportunity to discuss the details of Resilient Bridgeport further with any one of you or your colleagues, either through questions today at this hearing or in the future, and believe strongly that you'll all find something of value for your own neighborhoods as we demonstrate and implement potential solutions in ours.

Thank you.